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THE AMERICAN STANDARD EDITION OF THE REVISED BIBLE.

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WE now have in our hands¹ the *final form for Americans* of the great Revision of the English Bible which was first published complete in 1885.² When the Revised Bible appeared in that year, the American Committee agreed to recognize the fourteen-year copyright which in England belonged to the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge, in order that the expenses of the preparation of the Revision might be fully met. It was anticipated by that committee, however, that when the copyright period should expire (in the summer of 1899), it would be desirable to publish in America and for Americans an edition of the Revised Version which should incorporate in the text the many readings recommended by the American, but not adopted by the English, Revisers. The two appendices which were attached to the Revised Version of 1885 contained an incomplete conspectus, hurriedly prepared under pressure of the publishers, of the more important of these "readings and renderings preferred by the American Committee."

In 1897, about two years before the expiration of the English copyright period, the American Revision Committee entered into an agreement with Messrs. Thomas Nelson & Sons, of New York, for the publication by them, in or after the summer of 1899, of the *American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible*. The

¹ THE HOLY BIBLE : Containing the Old and New Testaments, translated out of the Original Tongues. Being the version set forth A. D. 1611, compared with the most ancient authorities and revised 1881-85. Newly edited by the American Revision Committee A. D. 1901. Standard Edition. New York : Thomas Nelson & Sons. Styles and prices from \$1.50 to \$9.

² For full information regarding the Revisers and their work see SCHAFF'S *Companion to the Greek Testament and Revised Version* (Harper & Brothers, New York, fourth edition, 1894).

committee had held meetings from time to time in the interval since 1885, and for the past four years had been engaged continuously, with reference to issuing this work. The preparation of the text of this American edition did not consist alone in the transference to the pages themselves of the readings noted in the appendices, which would have been a merely mechanical performance. Besides incorporating the appendix readings in the text, much time and labor were bestowed on the correction of errors and oversights, and the removal of inconsistencies and infelicities; also many preferences of the committee which were waived in drawing up the appendices, were introduced. Other features of importance, still to be described, were added, with the intention of making the American Standard Edition the best and most useful form of the Revised English Version. This task was ably and successfully done by the committee, under the leadership of Professor George E. Day, of Yale University, secretary of the Old Testament Company, and of Professor J. H. Thayer, of Harvard University, secretary of the New Testament Company. It is now presented, with their authorization, by Messrs. Nelson & Sons, of New York.

It was the desire of the English Presses to publish also this authorized American edition. They would not agree, however, to comply entirely with the requirements of the American Committee as to modifications and new features for this edition. This left the committee wholly free to put the work into the hands of an American publisher, as they proceeded to do. Nor was the committee unmindful of the fact that, inasmuch as the English Presses had had the monopoly of the Revised Bible for fourteen years, it was quite proper for American publishers to reap some of the technical and financial reward which attach to the publication of such a work. The action of the Oxford and Cambridge Presses which followed upon this decision of the American Committee seems to have been determined by money considerations only. In the fall of 1898, one year before the English copyright period had expired, and therefore before the American Committee, having regard to its original agreement, would publish an American edition, the English houses prepared a text of

the Revised Version which simply incorporated the readings suggested in the two appendices, and flooded the markets in England and America with this text, which they conspicuously marked as the "American Edition." It did not present the distinctive features which the American Committee had prepared for its work, it contained but a part of the readings which that committee preferred, and it was without the corrections and improvements which that committee wished to make, so that it in no way represented the American Committee, and was not entitled to be called the "American Edition." It was published, not only without the authorization of, but entirely against the wishes of, the American Revision Committee. Such disregard of international courtesy and moral right cannot be overlooked, and it is to be the more regretted because it was manifested in connection with the publication and sale of the Bible itself.

Notwithstanding the many differences between the Revised Version of 1885 and that of 1901, this new Standard Edition is not to be regarded as a real departure from the early work. The changes made are entirely within the spirit and the method of the first issue of the Revision, and are such as have in the great majority of cases already commended themselves to the great body of biblical scholars. The surviving members of the American Committee, who have prepared this *final form* of the Revised Version, have not made any modifications of moment which were not approved by a two-thirds vote of all the members in the original sessions of the committee preceding the year 1885. This preserves the identity of the work, and is to be commended, although the sixteen years which intervene between that time and this have made possible numerous improvements in text and translation which have not been introduced. Appendices have been furnished to the edition of 1901 showing the readings of the edition of 1885 in all places where the Standard Edition departs from them, so that one can readily see wherein the differences between the first and the last form of the work consist.

As one looks upon the Standard page, three departures from the earlier form are conspicuous: (1) Across the top of the page, above the text, is a line in small bold-face type which in

two or three entries states the main topics with which the text of the page is concerned. These entries are admirably chosen and worded; they can be of great service to many readers and students of the Bible. The chapter heads and page heads which were printed with the version of 1611 were in many respects unsatisfactory, and the absence of any such summary headings was felt in 1885 to be an improvement. Perhaps all will not be pleased with the return to this feature. But, at any rate, the heads here furnished are as nearly unobjectionable as any such heads could be. (2) A system of carefully selected Scripture references has been introduced, standing in a column down the center of the page between the two columns of text. These references present an entirely new collation, being directed mainly to the illustration of national customs, characteristic phrases, peculiarities of vocabulary or style, correspondences between different biblical books, and the like. In those portions of the Scripture which contain parallel accounts, this fact is designated by references printed in italics. References which bear upon modern exegetical opinion, and which indicate Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, are separated from the others and printed in the outer margins. There can be no question that this Standard set of references is the most scholarly and useful now to be had; the lack of this implement for Bible study has been one of the serious faults of the Revised Version hitherto. (3) The chapter and verse numbers are inserted in the body of the text, instead of being set out along the edge. This is, in the opinion of the present writer, one of the very few defects of the American Standard Edition. In the case of the chapter numbers, no objection would need be made. But in the case of the verse numbers, this arrangement is to be condemned, for two reasons: first, because the eye has much difficulty in picking out the verse numbers,³ so that a student is greatly hindered in looking up references; secondly, because to one reading a passage in the Bible the verse numbers are constantly a

³ The "American Edition" of the English Presses embodied the verse numbers in the text, but printed them in bold-face figures; this made it easier to discover them on the page, but gave the typography a blotchy appearance.

barrier to smooth reading—one has, figuratively speaking, to *step over* each verse number as he comes to it. Would it be too much to hope that the committee might still be persuaded to adopt the marginal method of numbering for subsequent issues of their edition? In cases where, by this method, the end of one verse and the beginning of another in the same line are not apparent (as sometimes, but not often, happens), let a slight superior perpendicular dash indicate the point of division, as is done in the Nestle edition of the Greek text and German translation of the New Testament.⁴

The margins on both sides of each page are used, as formerly, to present variant readings of the text and variant modes of the translation of the text. These marginal notes have been thoroughly revised. For example, in the Old Testament the edition of 1885 contained 240 references to readings of the ancient versions; in this edition the number has been reduced to 42, because no more than this have a sufficient attestation or importance to deserve a place in the margin. Also, the particular version or versions from which a variant comes are here named. Hundreds of other marginal readings have been altered or dropped from the Old Testament pages. In the New Testament a smaller proportion of changes have been made in the margins, but still they are very numerous. And here a second defect of the American Committee's work must be noted: it is well known that the English Revisers, following the edition of 1611, translated the names of coins mentioned in the Bible into corresponding coin values and names of the English monetary system, which was a good thing to do, since this would aid the English reader to understand the passages. When, therefore, an American edition was made, the natural course—and the only proper one—would have been to use American values and names for the coins, so that American readers might better understand the passages. This course, strange to say, has not been followed; instead, the English coin names (belonging to an irregular, antiquated system) are retained in the text, the United States names and values appearing only in the margin.

⁴ Württembergische Bibelanstalt, Stuttgart, 1898.

So we in America must still read in our Bible about "pounds," "shillings," "pence," and "farthings." Could the American Revisers have supposed that by some such concessions they could secure an adoption of their edition as the "Standard" in Great Britain also?

Concerning the use of italics in the text of the Standard Edition no statement has been made by the Committee. It seems, therefore, that, as in the editions of 1611 and 1885, those words and phrases are printed in italics for which the Hebrew or Greek has no corresponding words or phrases, but which by the genius of the original language are implied, so that they need to be expressed in an English translation. With regard to the italic letter used, the eye is constantly offended by the fact that its face is too large for the roman letter with which it is associated, so that the words in italic appear like excrescences on the page. The art and fitness of the italic letter used in the edition of 1885 are in striking contrast. Really, the thing that should be done with these added words and phrases is to print them in roman type like the rest, but inclose them between brackets. Only so can the untrained reader of the Bible be protected against treating the italicized material as emphatic, since italics always denote emphasis in all the other literature he reads. The American Committee were not prepared, however, to make so great a change from the edition of 1885.

In the matter of the paragraph divisions of the text some departure has been made from the earlier form of the Revised Version. The paragraphing of the New Testament has seldom been disturbed, except in parallel narratives of the gospels, where some changes have been made for the sake of uniformity. In some cases in the epistles and Revelation the more decided transitions to a new topic have been indicated by leaving a line blank. But in the Old Testament the modifications are numerous. In some cases the point of paragraph division is removed to a different place; but the frequent changes consist in shortening the paragraphs, many of which were left entirely too long in the edition of 1885. The division of verses into lines has been altered in some places in the poetical books. Further, the punctuation of the Old Testament has been thoroughly revised,

and to some extent modernized. The overworked colon has been somewhat relieved, being replaced at many points by the comma, semicolon, or period. The changes at times affect the interpretation, as in Gen. 2: 5 ; 14: 24 ; Ezek. 29: 9, 10. Much more frequent use has been made of the hyphen. The capitalization of the text has been also in a measure improved.

A striking feature of this new edition is the wording of the New Testament title-page, which reads: "The New Covenant, commonly called the New Testament," etc. The term "Covenant" is certainly better, and it would be well if we could learn to speak of the Old and the New Covenants instead of Old and New Testaments. Improvement has been also made in the wording of the titles to the books of the New Testament. Instead of "the Gospel according to Matthew," "the Gospel according to Mark," etc., we now read "the Gospel:—According to Matthew, According to Mark," etc. By this means the term "Gospel" is restored to its meaning, when it signified the narrative of Jesus' life and teaching, not the several books which contained such narrative. The designation "Saint" has been dropped before the names of the evangelists, according to the praiseworthy American custom. Instead of "the Acts of the Apostles" we now read simply "the Acts," as given by **Ν** (Πράξεις) and preferred by Tischendorf, against BD (Πράξεις Ἀποστόλων), which is preferred by Westcott and Hort, Nestle, Wendt, and others; it is very difficult to determine what was the primitive title of the book. Paul's name has been removed from the title of the epistle to the Hebrews, in accordance with the consensus of scholarly opinion ancient and modern. The designation "the Apostle" has also been dropped after Paul's name in the titles of the Pauline epistles. The word "General" has been eliminated from the titles of the epistles of James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1 John, and Jude. Instead of "the Revelation of St. John the Divine" we read simply "the Revelation of John." These changes are made for the purpose of restoring as far as possible the titles in use for the books in the first centuries, as against the more elaborate titles which grew up at later times. It will be remembered that the English Revision Committee

pronounced that they would not make any changes in the titles of the books, but would retain those of the edition of 1611.

The further differences of the Standard edition consist of verbal changes, the number of which runs into the tens of thousands. Most conspicuous in the Old Testament is the substitution of "Jehovah" for "Lord" and "God" in passages where this is the reading of the Hebrew,⁵ and of "Sheol" for "the grave," "the pit," and "hell" in the thirty-five passages left unchanged in the edition of 1885. In the New Testament the phrase "Holy Spirit" has uniformly replaced the phrase "Holy Ghost," the word "ghost" having now acquired a limited and inappropriate sense. In fifteen passages, eleven of them in Matthew, we read "through" instead of "by" in such phrases as "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet." In seventeen passages we read "trial," "try," or "make trial of," instead of "temptation" and "tempt," where there is no direct reference to wrongdoing. The term διδάσκαλος, referring to Jesus, is translated "teacher" in all instances in the gospels, replacing the less correct "master;" while "demon," "demoniac," or "possessed with a demon" are given instead of "devil" and "possessed with a devil." The word "corn," which with us means maize (Indian corn), is replaced by "grain," the references in the Bible being to wheat, barley, etc. One notices, however, that the adjustment of the change is not complete; *e. g.*, in Matt. 12:1 we read: "At that season Jesus went on the sabbath day through the grain fields; and his disciples were hungry and began to pluck ears and to eat." Now, the term "ears" is used of maize, but is not used in common English among us of the head or beard of wheat, barley, etc. Constantly throughout both Testaments the pronoun "who" (or "that") has been substituted for "which" in places where the reference is to persons, an improvement which will be appreciated by

⁵ Regarding this it is said in the preface: "The change . . . is one which will be unwelcome to many, because of the frequency and familiarity of the terms displaced. But the American Revisers, after a careful consideration, were brought to the unanimous conviction that a Jewish superstition, which regarded the Divine Name as too sacred to be uttered, ought no longer to dominate in the English or any other version of the Old Testament."

those who, with a literary conscience, have to read the Revised Version. Something has been done toward establishing consistency and propriety in the use of "will" and "shall." The modern differentiation of "beside" from "besides" is observed. The obsolete *u* in such words as "labor," "favor," "behavior," "clamor," etc., is dropped; but it is inconsistently and unwisely allowed to remain in the spelling of "Saviour." An innumerable host of archaic spellings and words have been relegated to the past where they belong; yet there has been only a beginning made toward the modernization of the English, and there seems really no reason why a hundred changes should not have been made where the American Revisers have made one. To be sure, they say that they did not forget "that they were dealing with a venerable monument of English usage, and have been careful not to obliterate the traces of its historic origin and descent." So they claim only to have removed those archaisms which are most offensive to the ear or eye, or are unintelligible to the ordinary reader. But there remain untouched thousands of archaisms quite as bad as those displaced, *e. g.*, "assay" (for attempt), "the more part" (for majority), "almsdeeds," "haply," "betwixt," "clave unto him," "mine oil," "gainsaying," "holden," "wax not weary," "evil affected against," "divers" (diseases), "not to adventure himself," etc.; a complete list would be almost endless, and every one of them might have been—should have been—modernized.

In a large number of passages the interpretation itself has been altered or improved. "Justice" is rightly given instead of "judgment" in Matt. 23:23. "Very religious" is better than "somewhat superstitious" in Acts 17:22. "A factious man" is better than "a man that is heretical" in Titus 3:10. "Add one cubit unto the measure of his life" is better than "add one cubit unto his stature" in Matt. 6:27. The reading of John 14:1, "Believe in God, believe also in me," represents the prevailing interpretation of scholars. But there still remain some passages which needed, and should have received, improvement; *e. g.*, the word "swellings" (*φυσιώσεις*), in 2 Cor. 12:20, is entirely unintelligible to the reader—it means in this connection "inflation

with pride," "self-assertion;" in 1 Cor. 13:12 "darkly" is not the best English word to translate *ἐν αἰνύματι*, which here means "indistinctly," "in dim and distorted form" (the figure being that of seeing oneself in the imperfect metal mirrors of that age); and would it not be well to remove the ambiguity and indirection from Matt. 5:48 by translating, "Be ye therefore perfect," instead of, "Ye therefore shall be perfect" (compare the parallel saying, Luke 6:36), since the imperative force is certainly intended?⁶

This first issue of the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible is printed in but one size of type (long primer), large and clear, upon a broad page. Doubtless other issues, in various sizes of type and various forms, will follow. We need copies which can be bought for a small price, and the Old and New Testament in separate volumes. But it would be a benefit to the eyes of Bible students and readers if this large-type issue could come into more general use. A good set of maps, with an index of places, accompanies this edition.

With regard to the work as a whole, one can have no hesitation in saying that the American Standard Edition is by far, and in every respect, the best English translation of the Bible in existence, both for scholars and for people. If it has been possible to indicate some elements in which it falls short of the ideal English Bible, it must be remembered that there is difference of opinion as to the nature of the ideal, that an ideal is more easily conceived than realized, and that a great ideal such as this is can be achieved only by successive stages. Several such stages have been passed in the growth of the English Bible, and the beginning of the twentieth century has witnessed the most advanced stage in the process. It is the privilege, but also the duty, of every man, woman, and child in America

⁶So BLASS, *Grammar of New Testament Greek* (p. 209), H. Holtzmann, Meyer, B. Weiss, Wendt, and nearly all interpreters. There is nothing to be gained, and much to be lost, by transferring to the English the idiom of the future indicative for the imperative, which came from the Hebrew into the Septuagint and from the Septuagint into certain passages of the New Testament. This idiom is almost unknown to the English language for commands in the positive form, and does not convey the right idea to the English reader, since it denotes promise rather than command, and wrongly removes the thought from the present to the future.

(Great Britain may speak for herself) to use the best English translation of the Bible which is available to them, namely, the edition of 1901. Fortunately the Revised Version is already well known and widely used among us; all scholars and well-trained ministers have adopted it, while an innumerable host of Sunday-school teachers and educated laymen have it in their hands. To all such, and to those who have still to learn that the Authorized Version of 1611 is and ought to be superseded, this American Standard Edition of the Revised Version is to be insistently commended. All who have at heart the supremacy of the Christian religion, and who wish for a spread of the knowledge of and reverence for the Bible, should promote the use of the best English translation of the Bible which has yet been prepared.

A Meditation.

Rev. 3:21. "He that overcometh, to him will I give to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne."

God is the great servant; he rules the universe through what he does for it; he is supreme because he has given all to all, and himself for all, in perpetual outgoing of heart and life. Jesus Christ has overcome all oppositions to the free, godlike doing of the works of love, and has given himself in perfect surrender for our sake. Overcoming thus, and attaining to the perfection of loving service, he has entered into the supremacy of God, and sat down, as it were, at his side. To one who overcomes selfishness and self-will, and follows Christ in love and service, attaining to the likeness of the Master, the heavenly voice promises admission to a place at the Master's side. The overcoming that set Christ beside the Father will set any soul of man beside Christ.

WILLIAM NEWTON CLARKE.